

act, by their curses. Bede records that twelve hundred of them perished on this occasion ; but the number is probably over-stated, and no general persecution appears to have taken place. It may have been, indeed, that so numerous a fraternity was regarded beforehand with suspicion by the Angles, as likely to foment rebellion among the British, so that they were the less inclined to pass over this act of hostility, and perhaps seized the occasion as a pretext for wreaking vengeance upon them.

Laurentius followed exactly in the steps of his predecessor, and the Church appears to have been contained within nearly the same limits during his primacy, outwardly prosperous during the life-time of her royal patron. At the close of his long reign followed the troubles above noticed, caused by the accession of a heathen king ; and they lasted until his conversion restored tranquillity to the Church. Laurentius made the same overtures as Augustin had done to the British Church, extending them also to the Scots in Ireland, but with no better success. The opposition to Augustin, arising mainly from the national antipathy existing between the Saxons and Britons, naturally descended to his successor, as the causes which had first aroused it continued still in operation : and in the following century Bede* points to the animosity still existing between the two nations in his day, as a sufficient evidence of the fruitlessness of all efforts at reconciliation. No great changes appear to have taken place in the Church during the short primacy of Mellitus, who succeeded Laurentius, and his death (A.D. 624) may be considered to close the period to which the present paper is limited ; for the episcopate of Justus witnessed the commencement of that rapid extension of Christianity, which resulted, before the end of the seventh century, in its permanent establishment under Archbishop Theodore. It may at first sight appear surprising that, during the quarter of a century, or thereabouts, which elapsed from the landing of Augustin to the death of Mellitus, the English Church should not have spread over a wider surface than we find it did : but, compared with modern missionary labour, the work performed by these pioneers of Christianity among the heathen English was probably as great as could reasonably be expected. The progress of the truth was sure if not rapid, for it may be safely asserted that the conversions made were for the most part genuine, since the Church was doubtless freed from insincere and vacillating members by the troubles which ensued on the death of Ethelbert. The flame of truth which ensued was all this time increasing in intensity, to spread throughout the length and breadth of the land at the first removal of the barriers which impeded its progress.

* Hist. Eccl. ii. 4.